



## DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

### Veterans Health Administration

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Dear VHA Health Care Provider:

Omeprazole has been added to the VA National Formulary following the recent FDA approval of generic omeprazole as an AB-rated, therapeutic equivalent of Prilosec<sup>®</sup>. *Generic omeprazole is now the least expensive proton pump inhibitor (PPI) on formulary in the VHA.* Since the PPIs are considered to be therapeutically interchangeable, generic omeprazole should be prescribed when clinically appropriate as the preferred orally administered PPI. The use of generic omeprazole in place of other PPIs currently on the VANF (lansoprazole and rabeprazole) will save the VHA at least \$50 million per year.

*Dosing.* Generic omeprazole will be available in the VHA only as 20-mg, gold and white capsules. In general, for acid-related gastrointestinal disorders including eradication of *Helicobacter pylori* infection related to duodenal ulcers, omeprazole 20 mg daily is therapeutically comparable to standard doses of other PPIs (i.e., esomeprazole 20 mg, lansoprazole 30 mg, pantoprazole 40 mg, and rabeprazole 20 mg daily).

*Alternative Routes of Administration.* For patients who have difficulty swallowing capsules, generic omeprazole capsules may be opened and the microtablets sprinkled on apple sauce. For enteral tube administration, alternatives other than generic omeprazole should be used. These include lansoprazole mixed in apple juice only, Simplified Lansoprazole Suspension, Prilosec granules mixed in orange juice, or Simplified Omeprazole Suspension using Prilosec. There are no studies to support the stability and intragastric pH control of generic omeprazole when mixed in orange juice or prepared as Simplified Omeprazole Suspension.

*Drug Interactions.* The interaction between PPIs and benzodiazepines is probably of more clinical concern with omeprazole (and esomeprazole) than the other PPIs. Patients currently on lansoprazole, rabeprazole, or pantoprazole and who are concomitantly taking CYP450-metabolized benzodiazepines such as diazepam should be cautioned that they may experience an increase in benzodiazepine-related effects when switched to omeprazole. Patients who develop intolerable symptoms as a result of this drug interaction may benefit from a reduction of the benzodiazepine dose, use of a benzodiazepine that is metabolized by glucuronidation (lorazepam, oxazepam, or temazepam), or the use of another PPI.

*Other Considerations.* Generic omeprazole, like Prilosec, contains lactose and may not be suitable for patients with severe lactose intolerance. Other PPI products do not contain lactose.

For a more complete discussion of drug interactions and the therapeutic interchangeability of PPIs, see the *Abbreviated Drug Class Review: Proton Pump Inhibitors*, available at:

<http://vaww.pbm.med.va.gov/reviews/ppiabbreviatedreview.pdf>.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the use of generic omeprazole, please contact the pharmacy at your facility.

Sincerely,

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